

BEDFORD
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Annual Report
of
Medical Officer of Health
FOR
1913.

To the Bedford Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report accompanied by the usual tables, on the sanitary condition and the state of the public health during the past year. The Housing Question is an important one for you to consider, and one which presents many difficulties to be overcome. I beg to draw your special attention to the remarks I have made which will be found on page 14.

POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT.

I have estimated the population to be 19,296 by adopting the usual methods of calculation suggested by the Registrar General. This shows a slight increase. It will be found that the increase takes place in the villages near Bedford, especially on the South side where there is a demand for houses at a remunerative price. In the more distant villages there are very few houses being erected and each year some of the old ones are disappearing which indicates that the population is on the decrease, and in some of the returns from these villages the number of deaths is equal to the number of births. Then again the returns from the villages in close proximity to Bedford shew the number of births to be double and treble the number of deaths. The reason for this is that the younger people gravitate towards the towns leaving a large percentage of elderly persons behind.

Young people are not satisfied to remain in the country unless they can have more amusements and better housing.

BIRTH RATE.

329 births have been registered, 4 births occurring elsewhere have been allotted to this district making the corrected number 333, *i.e.* a rate of 17·25, the lowest on record. Each year the birth rate is declining. I have noticed that in certain villages such as Harrold, Carlton, Turvey, and Stagsden, there are very few babies born. The number of births and deaths are nearly equal.

THE DEATH RATE.

The number of deaths occurring in or belonging to the district, although taking place elsewhere, is 241 giving a rate of 12·4, which is rather lower than that of last year. This is no doubt due, to some extent, to the mild Autumn and cool Summer we have experienced. As is usually the case in this district there is a large number of deaths at 65 and over, many of them being due to old age alone. The Registrar General has issued a "Factor for Correction" which

is to be multiplied by the death rate. The result is then called the corrected death rate, which this year is 9.95. This factor is estimated on the age and sex distribution of England and Wales, and is so calculated that after multiplying it by the actual death rate, we get a rate that would have been the correct one if our age and sex distribution were the same as that of England and Wales.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

The deaths under one year were 19, giving a rate of 57.05 the lowest on record, which to some extent will counter-balance the extremely low birth rate. I consider the number of deaths from preventible causes to be 11. The mortality under this heading should be very low when we take into consideration the small number of summer diseases and the mildness of the weather for the last three months of the year.

MORTALITY OF CHILDREN.

25 deaths are recorded. After excluding the 19 occurring during the first year of life, we are left with six for the next four years. Three of these are due to congenital causes, over which we have no control, leaving three to be attributed to disease, of which Tuberculosis claims two. The prevalence of the latter disease is one of the arguments showing the necessity for better housing.

MORTALITY OF THE AGED.

Out of a total of 241 deaths, 133, that is more than half, were those of persons aged 65 and over.

If we could exclude the deaths which are due to natural decay the rate would be materially diminished.

PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT.

The Bedford Rural District may be described as consisting of the Northern third of the county, omitting the Borough of Bedford, Kempston Urban District and the Eaton Socon Rural District. Its area is 94,271 acres, the whole county comprising 302,947. The River Ouse crosses the district in its circuitous route forming a wide valley with undulating hills on either side. The Ouse valley is mainly composed of gravel and alluvial deposits, the hills in the northern portion are on the great oolite formation, the southern on the Oxford clay. The chief occupation of the inhabitants is

agriculture. There are some water and steam flour mills and leather factories in the district. South of Bedford in the Wootton parish there are three large brick works, and a few small ones in other parts. These latter are only used for local purposes.

The amount of out-door relief has been greatly decreased since the introduction of Old Age Pensions, being now practically confined to a few persons who have unfortunately been disabled owing to unforeseen circumstances and illnesses.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER SUPPLY.

The following five village are supplied with water from public mains :—

Village.	Source of Supply.
Wymington.....	From the Rushden Water Works.
Cardington	From the Biggleswade Water Board.
Elstow	” ” ” ”
Goldington	” ” ” ”
Renhold	” ” ” ”

The following three villages are partially supplied from private sources :—

Village.	Source of Supply.
Harrowden	Biggleswade Water Board.
Biddenham	Bedford Water Works.
Turvey.....	Deep Well.

The rest of the district is supplied with water in three ways :—

1, From shallow wells which in the majority of cases are not protected from surface drainage and in consequence are liable to be polluted. This supply cannot be considered satisfactory.

2. From deep wells which as a rule have no protection from surface pollution.

3. From ponds and water holes in fields and along the road sides. The source of this supply needs only to be mentioned in order to be condemned.

The water supply of many villages is not satisfactory. Sooner or later the Council must consider and devise means whereby a more wholesome supply can be obtained. I am often faced with the argument that there are many old people in the country who have reached a great age in spite of the fact of having drunk polluted water all their lives. This statement can best be answered by inquiring after those who have succumbed in their infancy or in

the prime of life. Some of these would be alive now if their health, food, drink and sanitary arrangements had been looked after with the care that is devoted to these details at the present time. This water question is directly and indirectly one of the factors of disease, and I should like to be able to report year by year that something is being done to remedy the defects of the present arrangements. During the past and the previous year your Council considered the supply of water to the parishes of Eastcotts and Wilstead and decided that the proposed scheme would entail a greater burden on the rates than the inhabitants could reasonably be asked to bear. I am informed that there is still an active demand in these parishes for a new system, and that the promoters are determined to persist in their efforts to secure a public supply.

Great Barford is another village whose water supply I have brought forward for consideration. This question is now being considered by your Water Committee, and I hope before long they will report to the Council.

I think this is a suitable opportunity for stating that I do not approve of the method that has been adopted in ascertaining whether a change in the water supply in the village is necessary, desirable and acceptable. I refer to the post-card system. Post-cards, with questions to be answered, have been forwarded to each tenant and householder in the village in which the question of water supply has arisen. I am of opinion that the answers received whether in the affirmative or in the negative are not representative of the true facts. The arguments for and against are not considered, and decisions are based upon financial considerations alone, and not upon considerations of Public Health. When the cost of the scheme has been carefully estimated and stated publicly, the majority of people are influenced by one or two who say that a public supply always costs double the original estimate, and if it is stated that a supply can be obtained at a cost of 2d. per week for a cottage rented at £4 per annum, the opponents of the scheme persuade the majority that the expense would probably be double.

In my last report I referred to certain villages to which a public water main could and should be taken. The villages are Great Barford, Roxton, Cople, Eastcotts, Wilstead and Clapham. The parishes of Great Barford, Eastcott and Wilstead have been considered. Your Committee is now considering Roxton, Cople and Clapham. I wish to make special reference to Roxton. Roxton is a parish composed of three hamlets, Roxton, Chawston and Colesden, which are situated some distance from each other. The hamlet of Roxton is bordering on the Biggleswade District, and the water main from the Biggleswade Water Board approaches within half-mile of the nearest houses. I consider that to supply the village with water would mean the laying down of one-and-half-miles of pipes.

The following figures should be carefully considered by you :—

The population for the hamlet of Roxton at the last census is	247
The number of houses	65
The number of houses which have no water supply or have unprotected shallow wells less than 10 ft. deep.....	33
The number of houses with wells over 10 ft. and under 20 ft.	7
The number of houses supplied with wells of which I could get no description because their sites are either unknown or are covered over in such a manner as to make examination impossible...	25
—	65

As far as I could ascertain all the wells are unprotected with the exception of one. I have examined from time to time samples of water from these shallow wells and have always found them polluted.

In view of the proposed erection of cottages in Roxton I think this is a most urgent question for the Council to consider.

The water supply of New Fenlake must also be specially reported on. The hamlet is composed of one street 200 yards long with houses on either side, bordering on the confines of the Borough of Bedford. The sub-soil is gravel and the water rises to a few feet of the surface. The wells are shallow, unprotected from surface pollution, close to drains, and not far distant from leaking cess-pools.

During the laying down of the pipes of the Bedford Sewage Scheme the water bearing stratum was tapped and the wells became dry. The villagers complained about it and the Bedford Borough Authorities are carting water there daily until such a time as the Bedford Sewage Scheme is completed, when it is hoped arrangements can be made for New Fenlake to become a contributory place, and be supplied with water from Bedford and connected with the Sewage Scheme.

POLLUTION OF RIVERS AND STREAMS.

Although the drainage of the district passes into small streams and thence into the Ouse, no serious nuisance involving any important question has been reported to me.

Small pollutions that do occur from time to time are being dealt with by the Sanitary Inspector, and so far the results have been satisfactory.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

NEW FENLAKE.—The question of sewerage this hamlet has been postponed till the Bedford Borough Authorities have finished laying down their new system of drainage. When the opportune moment arises, I intend to bring this matter again before you.

WOOTTON.—The question of the sewage disposal is still being discussed. This is a matter that should be undertaken this year.

COTTON END.—The Committee appointed to consider the question of laying down a new sewer to replace some old agricultural pipes has not made any recommendation.

SHARNBROOK.—Further improvement has been made in the Sharnbrook Park Sewage Works. A Silt Chamber and Storm Water Weir have been constructed to prevent the choking up of the Septic Tank with silt and the flooding of the Filter Beds. The works receive a weekly attention and are now working very satisfactorily.

The Odell Road Sewage Works continue to give every satisfaction.

TURVEY.—It is proposed to lay down about 200 yards of 6 in. Sewer in Newton Lane for the purpose of receiving the sewage from houses now discharging into the surface water drain and thence direct to the brook. In the summer-time many complaints are made about the state of the stream.

PAVENHAM.—It is proposed to cover in an open ditch for about 210 yards with 12 in. pipes which has been a source of trouble for some time past; this step will prove of great benefit to the owner of the field and to adjoining tenants.

GOLDINGTON.—There have been laid down in the Putnoe Lane 86 yards of 4 in. Water Main with a view to extensions in the future towards the Putnoe Building Estate.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

The system adopted in the majority of your villages are the pail and the privy vault, with a few water closets. The inspection of the district is not yet completed, and at present it is impossible to give the number relating to the whole district. When the inspection is finished I hope to give figures that are accurate and reliable. From the Sanitary Inspector's Report it will be seen that many conversions have taken place, pails being substituted for privy vaults, and that other improvements to closets have been carried out.

SCAVENGING.

A public system of scavenging is only carried out in one parish, that of Wynington.

The work is supervised by a Parochial Committee, who attend to all the details of the scheme. The contract is let yearly, and all the earth closet pails are emptied weekly, and ashes and house refuse are removed monthly. The contract for the year was £14 for the emptying of pails, and 4s. per month for the removal of tins, bottles, etc., and all ashes if placed in receptacles.

The Sanitary Inspector reports to me that he has received no complaints about the working of the system, and occupiers express themselves satisfied with the way in which the contract has been carried out. I have been endeavouring to start similar schemes in other parishes. In Turvey there is a desire that a scheme should be inaugurated. The Parish Council have requested your Council to take steps whereby a system may be set on foot. Your Council have delegated your powers to a Parochial Committee to take such steps as may comply with the wishes of the parish.

In Podington a voluntary system has been started. Arrangements were made with Wynington that their cart should be lent to Podington one night a week.

A man and boy undertook to go round with the cart and empty the pails in the hamlet of Podington and Hinwick. 30 houses are visited regularly out of a total number of 123 in these two hamlets. The householders who are taking advantage of this system have agreed to pay 2d. per week for the convenience. The principal landlord has undertaken to pay any deficit and to provide a horse.

The cost is estimated as follows:—	s.	d.
Cost of man and boy per week	7	6
Cost of hire of cart	1	0
Cost of horse hire for fetching and returning cart to Wynington and for providing a horse for the night	6	6
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	15	0
Receipts	5	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Deficit each week	10	0

It takes the man and boy three hours to complete the work. They start at 8 o'clock in the evening and finish at 11.

There is now a strong feeling among the villagers that the scheme should be made a public one instead of being voluntary.

I have found a man who is willing to make a contract for a year and to do all the work required.

I recommend the Council to take such steps as are necessary to enable the present system in Podington to be made a public one.

There are several other villages in which scavenging is badly needed. I trust the Council will see their way to consider the matter.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

Mr. Chapman, the Sanitary Inspector, has supplied me with the following Nuisance Returns for 1913:—

(1)	Defective and untrapped drainage	76
(2)	Insufficient drainage	13
(3)	Dilapidated and insanitary privies, converted to pails ...	108
(4)	Want of light and ventilation to closets	10
(5)	Insufficient closet accommodation	6
(6)	Want of ashpits with proper covers	33
(7)	Want of protection to wells and proper coverings	9
(8)	Foul pools, ditches and water courses	12
(9)	Offensive accumulations	49
(10)	Animals kept so as to become a nuisance	4
(11)	Cases of overcrowding	10
(12)	Rooms cleansed under Sec. 46 P. H. A., 1875.....	22
(13)	Polluted water supplies.....	17
(14)	Samples of water taken from analysis.....	13
(15)	Water certificates granted to new houses	25
(16)	Houses without sufficient water supplies.....	2
(17)	Number of houses not reasonably fit under Sec. 15 H. and T. P. Act	197
(a)	Windows with insufficient opening for venti- lation	105
(b)	Windows dilapidated.....	30
(c)	Windows, to enlarge and new, required for light and ventilation	26
(d)	Dilapidated floors	56
(e)	Wet floors and base of walls.....	129
(f)	Dilapidated staircases	2
(g)	Dilapidated plaster to walls and ceilings of houses (inside)	46
(h)	Dilapidated walls and gables of houses (outside)	12
(i)	Rooms to cleanse and whitewash	73
(j)	Want of damp courses	64
(k)	Want of eaves gutters to prevent damp base of walls	42
(l)	Defective roofs of houses	32
(m)	Want of light and ventilation to pantries ...	5
(n)	Want of pantries to store food	4
(o)	Houses with insufficient air space at rear.....	2
(p)	Dilapidated and wet pavement	3

(18)	Closing orders issued under Sec. 17 H. & T. P. Act	19
(19)	Demolition orders issued	0
(20)	Houses demolished	7
(21)	Number of rooms fumigated after infectious disease	192
(22)	„ „ schools „ „ „ „ „	5
(23)	Want of cleanliness in Cowsheds of Dairies	13
	Defective drairage.....	4
	Defective floors	7
	Insufficient light and ventilation.....	2
(24)	Want of cleanliness to Bakehouses	13
	New floors required	1
(25)	Want of Cleanliness to slaughterhouses	2
	New floors required and drainage	1

SUMMARY OF MATTERS DEALT WITH.

Inspections.	No.	Nuisances found.	Abated at end of Year.
House to house inspection under H. & T. P. Act...	1174	631	549
Houses and Premises under P. H. Act.....	No record ...	409	386
Factories and Wokshops ...	89	17	17
Cowsheds and Dairies	157	26	21
	<u>1420</u>	<u>1083</u>	<u>973</u>

WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

I. INSPECTION OF WORKSHOPS AND WORKPLACES.

Premises.	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Prosecutions.
Factories	2	None	None
Workshops	87	14	None
Workplaces			
	<u>89</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>.....</u>

II. DEFECTS FOUND IN FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, &c.

	Found.	Remedied.	Referred H.M. Inspector.
Want of cleanliness	15	15	None
Drainage of floors	1	1	None
Other defects	1	1	None
	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>.....</u>

III. OUTWORKERS.

There has been 1 list of Outworkers received this year.

IV. REGISTERED WORKSHOPS.

Bakehouses	39
Laundries	7
Tailors	6
Millers	8
Gasworks	1
Dressmakers	6
Other Workshops	160
	<hr/>
	227
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V. OTHER MATTERS.

Notices of occupation of workshops received from H.M.	
Inspector	3
Report (of action taken) sent to H.M. Inspector.....	0

SURVEYOR'S REPORT.

Plans received :—

New Houses	36
Additions	9
Other Buildings, Farm Premises, Stables, Cowsheds, Wash-houses, Barns, etc.	9
Temporary Buildings.....	2
Chapels	1
	<hr/>
	57
	<hr/>
Foundations inspected	29
Drain tests.....	31
Completed and Intermediate Inspection	97
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	157
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PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

There are no lodging houses, cellar dwellings or offensive trades carried on in the district and there are no bye-laws referring to these matters. Up to the present no necessity has arisen to ask the Council to draw up any bye-laws.

SCHOOLS.

The following schools have been closed on account of outbreaks and epidemics of infectious diseases :—

Name of School.	Department.	Disease.	Period of closure.
Cardington	Both.....	Whooping Cough ...	3 weeks.
Elstow	„	Scarlet Fever.....	1 „
Goldington	Mixed ...	Whooping Cough ...	4 „
„	Infants'	„ „ ...	6 „
Melchbourne.....	Both.. ...	„ „ ...	3 „
Odell	„	Scarlet Fever.....	2 „
Renhold	„	Whooping Cough ...	5 „
Roxton	„	Chicken Pox	2 „
Willington	„	Whooping Cough ...	6 „
Yielden	„	Measles	4 „

Schools are closed by an arrangement made with the School Medical Officer. When I am of opinion that a certain school should be closed, I recommend the closure to Dr. Herdman, the School Medical Officer, giving my reasons, who endorses my action if he approves of it. Sometimes we consult together. The arrangement has worked very satisfactorily.

The sanitary condition of the school is supervised by Dr. Herdman, School Medical Officer.

The following is the number of schools which adopt the various forms of sanitary conveniences :—

Number with moveable receptacles and pail	27
„ „ water closets	2
„ „ privy vaults.....	10

In Wymington the pail system was instituted in 1912 in place of the privy vault system.

Your Council may remember that both myself and your Sanitary Inspector advocated the adoption of a water carriage system as the village had both a public water supply and a public system of sewerage: in spite of this your Council did not insist on a water carriage.

The Sanitary Inspector reports to me as follows :—

Wymington School Earth Closets—

Boys.—Fairly clean apartments. No earth used in pails, offensive smells noticeable.

Girls.—Fairly clean apartments. No earth used. Pails full of urine, very offensive.

I am still of opinion that the adoption of the water carriage system is the only solution and to have adopted it in the first place would have been cheaper.

MILK SUPPLY

COWSHEDS AND DAIRIES.

Number of persons registered since Regulations came into force	
January, 1900.....	161
Number of persons now carrying on trade	131
„ cowsheds inspected.....	126
„ dairies „	31
Cowsheds having floors and drainage defective	11
„ requiring cleansing	13
„ with insufficient light and ventilation	2
Number of cows	1571
„ persons registered during the year	8
Want of cleanliness in cowsheds of dairies	13
Defective drainage	4
„ floors	7
Insufficient light and ventilation	2

The above figures will indicate the work that has been devoted to the milk supply. The larger cowsheds are kept in a fairly good condition. The tenants realise that it pays them better to keep their cowsheds clean and earn a good name.

The same inducement is not held out to the small man with the result that there are more defects found which require to be remedied.

On the whole I feel justified in saying that there is an improvement in the production of the milk supply. Circulars are sent round to all the registered cowkeepers, during the month of April, drawing their attention to the provisions of the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshop Order, requiring the lime-washing of the sheds in May.

BAKEHOUSES.

There are 39 bakers on the register, the majority of the bakeries are kept in a good condition.

Thirteen notices were sent requiring the premises to be cleansed and one notice requiring the laying of a new floor.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.

Nine in the district. It has been necessary to send two notices to draw the occupiers attention to the want of cleanliness of the premises and one notice requiring new floor and drainage.

There are no regulations dealing with slaughter houses.

HOUSING.

In this district, where private enterprise is unable to supply the need for the better housing of the labouring class, the housing question is one that must be taken into serious consideration and a remedy must be found.

Each year the houses for the agricultural labourers are becoming older and more unsuitable for dwellings; many of them falling into decay.

There have been very few new houses erected and these are above the means of the most necessitous.

In years gone by the labourer in the rural districts used to locate himself on the side of a road at a place which happened to be a little wider than the rest, here he seems to have erected an old type of house with mud and studded walls and placed on them rough poles for rafters which carried a thatched roof. The walls and roof were thick, the ceilings low (I have seen some 5 ft. 6 in. in height), windows very small, rooms dark, floors made of ordinary earth, now the floors are flagged or bricked. The bedrooms were small and dark, the sides and ceilings were formed by the sloping thatched roof, white-washed over. No passages existed, where there were two bedrooms entry into the second bedroom was made through the first and often it was necessary to step over a huge oak beam running across the house in the partition wall about 2 ft. from the floor level, to go into the second bedroom: one fireplace down stairs, none up. Generally the rooms were dark and the atmosphere stuffy. Many of these old cottages are still existing in the more remote villages, picturesque to look at but not suitable dwellings in which to bring up children healthily. For proof of this it is only necessary to ask the women how many children they have now and how many constituted the original family. Here we find there has been a heavy and preventable loss of infant life. In other villages where the inhabitants are not quite so primitive we find cottages with more conveniences and better lighted and ventilated, but, generally speaking, in all the villages there are many houses which are only fit to be occupied by elderly people who are immune from most of the ills to which flesh is heir. It will take many years to replace these old cottages even under the most advantageous methods of re-building that can be suggested. In the meantime it will be wise to let them be occupied by old age pensioners provided that they are kept reasonably fit and not dangerous for habitation.

A different standard of cottages ought to be adopted for young persons with children. I maintain that a living room with scullery and other usual conveniences are necessary with a minimum of three separate bedrooms which do not communicate with one another.

This bedroom accommodation is badly required.

I am appending the results of investigations I have made in six villages showing the proportion of houses with one or two bedrooms to the total number of houses in the parish.

Village.	No. of Houses in Parish.	Population.	No. with 1 Bedroom.	No. with 2 Bedrooms.	No. with 3 or more Bedrooms.	Average No. of Persons per house.
a.	98	358	14	44	40	3.75
b.	109	396	8	64	37	3.63
c.	224	841	16	73	135	3.75
d.	94	370	5	27	62	3.93
e.	305	1394	17	170	118	4.57
f.	175	587	14	89	72	3.27

The average number of persons per house for the whole district is 3.914.

These figures are all taken from the last census return.

I have taken a great interest in the various remedies that have and are being suggested for solving this difficult question and like many other problems the more difficult they are the greater the number of remedies. Some people think that by altering the bye-laws the remedy will be found, I think not, and I refer these people to the districts where bye-laws are non-existent, they will find the same dearth of new houses. We do not want our successors in 30 or 40 years time to condemn our houses and wonder why the Local Authority allowed such buildings to be erected.

My opinion is that a good well-built cottage with proper and suitable conveniences is what we require and that it can only be obtained by adopting a similar scheme to that which has been introduced into Ireland within the last few years. I have found very few people who are cognizant of the Irish Scheme and how it has worked. For their benefit I am giving the following particulars:—

The first Irish Labourers Act was passed in 1883, but very little was done until 1891. Various amending acts were passed till the Act of 1906 was put on the Statute Book, it was further amended in 1911.

Before 1906, 20,634 cottages were built and since then 22,046, making a total of 42,640. These figures are reckoned up to March, 1912. I am informed that 211 Rural District Councils out of 213 have put the Act into operation. The amount of money sanctioned on March 31st, 1912, was £7,906,273, this covering the cost of 42,640 cottages. The average cost for (a) Building Construction (b) Roads and (c) Land is a little less than £185 inclusive. The loans are granted for 68½ years at 3½% including interest and re-payment of principal.

64% of the cost of a house is met by this loan, the balance, 36% is given in the form of a state grant.

If some such scheme were to be adopted for English Rural District Councils we could let houses at 3s. per week and make them self-supporting. This is the remedy that I would suggest for your consideration. Another remedy has been put forward namely—that the Government should lend to Rural Districts, the people's money that is deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank at the same rate which the Government give. It will be argued that the Government will suffer a loss by this transaction; my answer is they may lose at the beginning but they would be recouped by having a population better housed, more healthy, more prosperous and an increased trade in the profits of which the Post Office would share.

I am informed that in Belgium the Government lend the money deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank on these terms, and that 30,000 houses have been erected.

The rate of interest given by the Post Office Savings Bank and charged to the Local Authorities is 3%

The six cottages erected at Sharnbrook under the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909, are all still occupied. Two tenants left, but their houses were taken immediately without any loss of rent: therefore the allowance which was reckoned for empties, namely—one week per year for one cottage, can be put to a reserve fund. The land at the back of the cottages, which is used for a drying ground, has been gravelled as it was found that the clay soil became sticky in wet weather and caused much inconvenience to the tenants.

ROXTON. The Parish Council petitioned your Council to erect cottages under the Act. Your Council referred the matter to the Housing Committee who, without any undue delay, communicated with the owners of the land to ascertain if they were willing to erect additional cottages. It was found, one landlord with 1,840 acres had 32 cottages, 29 of which housed labourers working on the estate. Another landlord owned 684 acres and only 4 cottages to house the labourers working on the farms. Speaking generally, the cottages are small and of an old type and are only fit to house old people who are immune from disease and ill-health. The first mentioned landlord informed your Committee that he could not build any fresh cottages but would be pleased to give land to the Council if they were so minded to build.

The other landlord arranged to erect four cottages at once and has further agreed to erect another two. While these negotiations were going on the Roxton Parish Council, not realizing the delays that always take place in public matters, became impatient and forwarded a complaint to the Local Government Board who sent down an inspector to hold a formal inquiry. Your Committee in the meantime, went on with their negotiations and arranged to apply for a loan to the Local Government Board to enable them to build six more cottages. The site comprising $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres has been given by the

landlord of the Roxton House Estate and it is generally acknowledged that the land chosen is most suitable. I think your Council ought to be congratulated upon having such a generous landlord to deal with, and if his example were followed by other owners of property it would assist in the better housing of the labouring class and enable Public Health Authorities to fight that dread disease Tuberculosis. Your Council have tendered their thanks to this generous landlord for his liberality and assistance, and in this expression of gratitude I heartily concur.

In my previous report I have mentioned the following villages in which the Housing Question must be considered, namely—Harrold, Milton Ernest, Turvey, Willington, Wilstead and Wootton. I hope to be able to announce in my next annual report that some steps have been taken to improve the conditions in the above villages.

The following tabular statement will show the work that has been done during the year under discussion:—

The number of dwelling houses under and for the purposes of Sec. 17 of the Act of 1909	1174
The number of dwelling houses which on inspection were considered to be in a state so dangerous and injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	20
The number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to the making of closing orders	20
The number of closing orders made	19
The number of dwelling houses the defects in which were remedied without the making of closing orders.....	197
The number of dwelling houses which after closing orders were put into a fit state for human habitation	0

The general character of the defects found to exist—

Damp walls, wet floors, want of damp-proof courses, windows too small for ventilation and light, dilapidated floors and walls, low ceilings and roofs not rain-proof.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICT.

The Council is composed of 38 members representing 41 villages and hamlets. They meet regularly every fourth Saturday. The office of Sanitary Inspector has been held since 1908 by Mr. Chapman, who has carried out his duties in a most conscientious manner, and has made many improvements in the district about which nothing is heard, small matters in themselves but adding to the comfort and health of many of our poorer neighbours.

The following villages have been inspected:—Eastcotts, Goldington, Renhold, Sharnbrook, Riseley, Thurleigh, Bohnhurst, Colmworth and Bromham.

On an average one village is thoroughly inspected every month, and the next month it is revisited to ascertain if the improvements recommended have been carried out in a proper and efficient manner.

The Isolation Hospital at Oakley accommodates 24 patients, and the diseases isolated and treated are Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria and Enteric Fever.

During the year under observation 19 Diphtheria and 33 Scarlet Fever cases were treated from your district. There was one fatal case of Scarlet Fever.

The Kempston Urban Council contributed 17 cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever. The Borough of Bedford have sent 29 cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever which they were not able to provide for in their own Isolation Hospital owing to the excessive prevalence of infectious diseases. We were very much pleased to be able to receive these cases from the Borough, and glad to have an opportunity of returning their kindness to us when some years ago our Isolation Hospital was taxed to its greatest capacity by a severe epidemic of Diphtheria at Goldington.

I hope in the future these friendly interchanges of conveniences will continue to enable the officers of both Authorities to combat the spread of any outbreak of disease.

The Isolation Hospital has three permanent blocks of buildings containing six wards, and one temporary block containing two wards. There is an administrative building, which has during the year been enlarged, and contains eight bedrooms, besides the usual rooms and offices.

Miss Berryman has been Matron for 12 years and is assisted by a staff of three permanent nurses, temporary nurses being obtained when required.

Dr. Rowland Coombs, the Medical Officer, lives in Bedford, where he is a Magistrate and a well known Medical Practitioner of long standing.

The Small Pox Hospital is situated in the parish of Milton Ernest in a most secluded spot.

There are two wards to accommodate four cases and an administrative block. The buildings are empty but arrangements are made so that cases can be taken there and treated at a few hours notice. The approach to the Hospital is along a grass lane; in wet weather the road gets into a very bad state. I would suggest to the Council that after the Winter is over, the ditch should be cleaned out and the ruts pecked in. This would keep the road drier, the question of metalling may have to be considered later on.

I am glad to report that the Hospital is about to be connected with a telephone.

There are no local Acts. The provisions of Part 3 of the Public Health Act, Amendment Act, 1890, applicable to Rural Districts were adopted in 1898, for the District as extended.

A chemical analysis of the water to be used is made by me when a certificate of occupation for a new house is required, except in the cases where the water is derived from a public main.

Your Council have agreed to defray the cost of bacteriological examination of swabs from supposed diphtheria throats, of sputum from tuberculosis patients and of cerebro-spinal fluid, and other pathological material required for diagnosis in cases of Cerebro-spinal Fever.

PREVELANCE AND CONTROL OVER ACUTE AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following were notified, :—

Scarlet Fever	41
Diphtheria	20
Erysipelas	1
Puerperal Fever	2
Pulmonary Tuberculosis... ..	31
Other Forms of „	6
	<hr/>
	101
	<hr/>

SCARLET FEVER—

Notifications received	41
Number treated in Isolation Hospital	33
Deaths	1
Death rate for England and Wales in 1912 on the cases notified is	1·83%

I have not given the death rate for the district as the figures are so small, statistics will only give misleading impressions and erroneous ideas.

There have been three small outbreaks, viz :—

Turvey	10 cases
Elstow	9 „
Odell	5 „

The Schools in the last two villages were closed to allow the class-rooms to be disinfected and cleansed. This precaution was taken because some of the children fell with this disease while they were attending school.

The Turvey outbreak commenced with 3 cases in different parts of the village which were notified about the same time. I visited Turvey with the Sanitary Inspector and we found two children had been absent from school for two or three weeks. On making inquiries from the resident Medical man we ascertained that he had just been called to see these two children whom I designate as L for purposes of distinction. He told us that in his opinion they were both suffering from Scarlet Fever. All these five cases were immediately removed to the Isolation Hospital and the houses were disinfected in the usual way. I also discovered that the three first notified cases had been mixing with members of the family described L, thus proving how three children in different part of the village acquired the disease from the same source. Four days after, another member of the family L was notified and removed to the Isolation Hospital. On September 20th two members of the family L who first fell ill returned home from the Isolation Hospital. On September 27th another member of this same family fell ill and was removed to the Isolation Hospital. On September 29th a child of L family returned from the Isolation Hospital. On October 5th and 6th the remaining two members of the family fell ill, were notified and removed to the Isolation Hospital, where I regret to say the last member of the family notified succumbed to a virulent form of the disease.

The other 17 notifications came from 8 different villages and were all sporadic cases.

DIPHTHERIA—

Notifications received	...	...	...	...	...	20
Number treated in Isolation Hospital	...	...	...	...	...	19
Deaths	...	...	...	...	...	0
Death rate for England and Wales in 1912 on						
the cases notified is	...	...	...	...	...	9·34%

The 20 cases were distributed among eight villages. Podington accounted for 6 cases, Clapham 4. The school of the former village was closed for two weeks and the class-rooms were disinfected and cleaned. The balance of the cases were sporadic ones. It has been my custom for some years on the receipt of a notification to arrange with the medical man in attendance for the injection of all the contact cases with diphtheritic antitoxin. The Council pays a fee of 2s. 6d. for each case and provides the antitoxin.

ENTERIC FEVER.—No cases. This is the second year in which I have been able to report that there has been no outbreak. This does not mean that efforts to improve sanitation must be relaxed.

ERYSIPELAS.—1 case, No deaths.

CEREBRO-SPINAL FEVER.—No cases notified.

POLIOMYELITIS.—No cases notified.

MEASLES.—No deaths. An outbreak at Yilden necessitated the closure of both departments of the school for 4 weeks. This was the only village affected.

WHOOPING COUGH.—1 death. The following schools were closed on account of this disease :—

Village.	Department.	Period of closure.
Goldington	Infant	6 weeks
Goldington	Mixed	5 „
Renhold	Both	5 „
Willington	Both	6 „
Cardington	Both	3 „
Melchbourne	Both	3 „

ZYMOTIC DISEASES—The following are included under this term :—

Small Pox.
Epidemic Enteritis.
Diphtheria.
Scarlet Fever.
Measles.
Whooping Cough.
Typhus.
Enteric Fever.

Fours deaths occurred giving a rate of '207 per 1'000 persons.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.

The following list shows the number of cases of infectious diseases treated at the Isolation Hospital :—

Village.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria.
Bromham	2 ... ..	...
Clapham ... ..	... ..	6
Elstow... ..	9 ... ..	...
Goldington	1	1
Harrowden	2	3
New Fenlake	2 ... ..	...
Oakley... ..	... ..	2
Odell	4 ... ..	...
Podington ... ..	... ..	4
Ravensden ... ..	... ..	2
Turvey... ..	10 ... ..	...
Wilstead	2 ... ..	...
Yielden	1 ... ..	...
Kempston ... ..	... ..	1
	—	—
	33	19
Bedford Borough... ..	23	5
Kempston Urban (including Barracks)	13	4
	—	—
	69	28
	—	—

FOR THE BEDFORD RURAL DISTRICT.—Patients under treatment 9. Total admissions 53. Discharged 54. Patients under treatment on December 31st, 7. Deaths (Scarlet Fever) 1.

FOR THE KEMPSTON URBAN DISTRICT.—Patients under treatment from last year, 4. Total admission 16. Discharged 14. Patients under treatment on December 31st, 5. Deaths 1.

FOR THE BOROUGH OF BEDFORD.—Total admissions 29. Discharged 29. Patients under treatment on December 31st, 0. Deaths 0

FOR THE BARRACKS.—Admissions 1. Discharged 1.

PREVELANCE OF AND CONTROL OVER TUBERCULOSIS.

The following were the notifications received. I have classified them according to age groups in decennial periods:—

At all ages.	At all ages.		Under 1.	1 and under 5.	5 and under 15.	15 and under 25.	25 and under 35.	35 and under 45.	45 and under 55.	55 and under 65.	65 and upwards.
	Male.	Female									
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	21	10			3	11	7	5	2	2	1
Other forms of Tuberculosis ..	4	2	1	1	1	2	1				

During the last few years the Local Government Board have issued four orders dealing with the notification of Tuberculosis in its different forms. By the last order all varieties are made compulsorily notifiable.

I do not think Medical Practitioners realize that every kind of Tuberculosis is included, for instance Lupus and allied conditions, enlarged glands, etc. On receipt of a notification I visit the patient and ascertain all particulars as to the length of time of the illness, of places visited, probable origin of infection, especially ask questions about relations, companions, milk supply, etc. I enquire into the habits of the patients, whether the windows are kept open, separate rooms are used and other similar questions. I urge them to get as much fresh air as possible. The Council do not supply sputum flasks. In their place I recommend the patients to use an ordinary pot or cup especially kept for that purpose and make a paper lining. I usually show one for a pattern. This paper lining is lifted out of the pot once a day or twice if necessary, and put on to the fire. Thus the pot or cup is not soiled and requires no special cleaning, nor do

the washings go down the drain as is the case of the sputum flask. Personally I am not in favour of the latter for use in the house in rural districts. If the patients are insured I inform them how they can obtain treatment under the National Insurance Act. I do not think subsequent visits are necessary nor advisable when they are being well looked after by their own medical man. The general health of all the occupants of the house I investigate to ascertain if other inmates show early signs of disease.

The County Council have during the year appointed a Tuberculosis Officer who is prepared to assist, when called upon by any medical man, in the diagnosis of cases, especially early ones. His services are at the disposal of any doctor who may require another opinion in both insured and non-insured patients. Bacteriological examination of sputum will be undertaken. It is proposed to have a Dispensary in Bedford but up to the present premises have not been secured. The public seem to be afraid to have a building for the purpose in a central part of Bedford: they do not realize there is no danger from this disease if patients are trained to exercise certain simple precautions. Prejudices are very hard to overcome. Shelters for non-insured persons are to be supplied at a small cost.

In the case of a death the Sanitary Inspector disinfected the premises with Formic Aldehyde and supplied the friends with antiseptic to cleanse all infected articles.

INVESTIGATION OF OTHER DISEASES.

CANCER.—There have been 27 deaths giving a rate of 1400 per million persons. Last year the number of deaths from this disease was extremely high and I made a special allusion to it. There is a diminution in the number but still the rate is very high. As I have previously stated, a few figures for a short period are often very misleading. I am therefore again giving the deaths from this disease for the last ten years:—

Year.	Number of Deaths.
1904	26
1905	18
1906	25
1907	18
1908	16
1909	27
1910	15
1911	20
1912	37
1913	27

This shows 229 deaths in 10 years, making an average of 22·9 and giving a death rate of nearly 1200 per million persons.

In conclusion I wish to tender my thanks to Mr. Payne for his assistance and advice in dealing with all legal matters; I hope our cordial relations will always continue.

I am, gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WALTER K. PARBURY, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.H.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.

March 31st, 1914.

TABLE I.

Vital Statistics of the whole District during 1913 and previous Years.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	BIRTHS.			TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN THE DISTRICT.			TRANSFERABLE DEATHS.		NETT DEATHS BELONGING TO THE DISTRICT.			
		Un- Corrected Number.	Nett.		Number.	Rate.	of Non- residents registered in the District.	of Resi- dents not registered in the District.	Under 1 Year of Age.		At all Ages.		
			Number.	Rate.					Number.	Rate per 1000 Nett Births.	Number.	Rate.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
1908	17878	373	373	20·8	209	11·6	2	21	28	75·06	228	12·75	
1909	17748	365	365	20·5	229	12·8	2	31	25	68·4	258	14·5	
1910	17619	376	376	21·3	198	11·2	1	30	24	63·8	227	12·8	
1911	19223	404	407	21·1	208	10·8	1	27	28	68·8	234	12·12	
1912	19260	355	360	18·6	217	11·2	0	50	23	63·8	267	13·8	
1913	19296	329	333	17·25	192	9·9	2	51	19	57·08	241	12·4	

Total population at all ages.....19,214

Number of Inhabited Houses 4,909

Average number of persons per house... 3,914

At Census of 1911.

Area of District in acres (inclusive of area covered by water).....94,271

TABLE II. Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1913.

[illegible]

Oakley Isolation Hospital.

TABLE III.

Causes of, and ages at Death during the
Year 1913.

CAUSES OF DEATH.				NETT DEATHS AT THE SUBJOINED AGES OF " RESIDENTS " WHETHER OCCURRING WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE DISTRICT.									Total Deaths whether of " Residents " or " Non- Resident " in Institutions in the District.
				All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 2.	2 and under 5.	5 & under 15.	15 & under 25.	25 & under 45.	45 & under 65.	65 & upwards.	
All Causes	{ Certified	...	...	240									
	{ Uncertified	...	...	1									
Enteric Fever...	...	...	...							
Small Pox	...	...	...							
Measles	...	...	...							
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	1				1					
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	1		1							
Diphtheria and Croup	...	...	...										1
Influenza	...	...	...	1								1	
Erysipelas	...	...	...							
Phthisis (Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	...	...	...	20					5	10	4	1	
Tuberculous Meningitis	...	...	...	3			1			2			
Other Tuberculosis Diseases	...	...	...	4	2				1	1			
Cancer, malignant disease	...	...	...	27					1	3	13	10	
Rheumatic Fever	...	...	...							
Meningitis	...	...	...	2				1			1		
Organic Heart Disease	...	...	...	40						2	11	27	
Bronchitis	...	...	...	10	3						1	6	
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	8	2						1	5	
Other diseases of Respiratory Organs	...	...	...	1								1	
Diarrhoea and Enteritis	...	...	...	6	2					1	1	2	
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	...	...	...							
Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	1							1		
Alcoholism	...	...	...							
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	...	...	...	7						2	1	4	
Puerperal Fever	...	...	...							
Other accidents and Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition	...	...	...							
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including Premature Birth	...	...	...	11	8	3							
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide...	...	...	...	9				1	1	4	1	2	
Suicide	...	...	...	2						1	1		
Other Defined Diseases	...	...	...	38	2	1				3	7	25	
Diseases ill-defined or unknown	...	...	...	9								9	
Senility	...	...	...	40								40	
				241	19	5	1	3	8	29	43	133	1

TABLE IV.

Infant Mortality.

1913. Nett Deaths from stated causes at various ages under
1 Year of Age.

CAUSE OF DEATH.	Under 1 week.	1—2 weeks.	2—3 weeks.	3—4 weeks.	Total under 1 month.	1—3 months.	3—6 months.	6—9 months.	9—12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
Tuberculous Diseases							1	1		2
Convulsions						1		1		2
Bronchitis							2		1	3
Pneumonia (all forms)								1	1	2
Enteritis							1	1		2
Premature birth ...	2	2	1		5					5
Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus							2	1		3
	2	2	1	0	5	1	6	5	2	19

Nett Births in the year :—

Legitimate	...	...	...	320
Illegitimate	...	...	...	13

Nett Deaths in the year of :—

Legitimate Infants	...	...	18
Illegitimate Infants	...	...	1